



Allandale Neighbor

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DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN 4,500 HOMES BY THE ALLANDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Shoal Creek: A Window Into the Past

Angela Caras

Have you ever wondered what the earth was like 100 million years ago? Or what it might be like to stand on the floor of an ancient sea? If you live in Allandale, you can experience the answers to those questions just by walking a few blocks over to Shoal Creek.

Shoal Creek is Allandale's very own window into the past, complete with fossil and mineral records of the last 100 million years or so. If you have kids, they have probably come back with fossils, shark's teeth, or pyrite that they found in the creek; if you have gone down into the creek yourself, you may have noticed the bands of varying rocks and clay that line its banks. All of this tells us something about what this part of Texas used to look like.

At the bottom and sometimes sides of the creek, the whitish limestone that you see was laid down around 100 million years ago. This formation, called Buda limestone, represents a time when what is now Austin lay under a somewhat shallow sea. The limestone is made out of the shells of tiny creatures with calcareous shells (like calcareous algae). These creatures lived and died by the trillions in that shallow sea, and the constant rain of their bodies, compacted ever tighter under pressure from above, eventually became limestone.

Continued on page 23

ANA: The Best Bargain in Allandale?

David Mintz

For only \$15 a year (or \$7, if you are a senior), you can help ensure that our neighborhood remains one of the most desirable places to live in one of the most vibrant cities in America,

When you join or renew your membership, you are helping protect the future of our neighborhood. Here are just a few examples of work that ANA has accomplished over the past year:

Allandale remains one of the safest neighborhoods in Austin through an

active crime watch program and safety committee. We actively help educate neighbors on keeping their families, homes and properties safe, while fighting problems such as graffiti;

We help build community through events such as the annual Fourth of July parade and reporting neighborhood events throughout the website, list-serv and newsletter;

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The next ANA General Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 5 at 7 p.m. at the NW Rec Center.

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SECRETARY Laura Beck
BOARD MEMBERS Bryan Glass, Jeff Marshall,
Naji Nodor, Steve Neel,
Cynthia Pryor, Laura
Slaughter and Nathan Vassar
Donna Beth McCormick is
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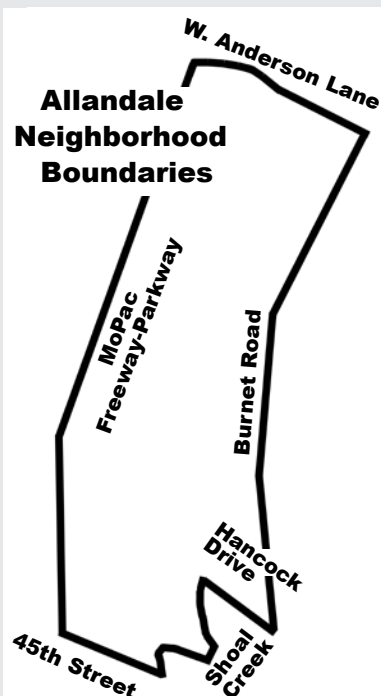
ANA General Meetings are held March and Septem-
ber on the first Wednesday of the month at NW Rec
Center.

Committees

BYLAWS Kata Carbone
COMMUNICATIONS Joi Chevalier
FINANCE Caroline Reynolds
MEMBERSHIP Jeff Marshall
NOMINATING Kata Carbone
SAFETY Laura DiCarlo
ZONING AND PLANNING Bryan Glass

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of Hancock): Ofc. Josh Metteauer, 974-8124, joshua.
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ANA President's Letter

David Mintz

One of the things that makes our neighborhood special is the comparatively large lots that many homes are built on, so that homes are not stacked up against each other like in many newer neighborhoods. However, as land values and housing prices in Austin continue to be some of most expensive markets in Texas, there is a growing threat from developers seeking to maximize their investments by re-subdividing lots so multiple homes can be built on a lot that previously held a single family home.

Deed restrictions throughout Allandale vary but most, if not all, require two-thirds of property owners within an existing area (such as Shoalmont II) to approve a lot re-subdivision. This action is separate from any approval the landowner must receive from the city.

In a recent case a developer has thus far ignored the requirement and is going forward with plans to re-subdivide a lot at 5111 Woodview and put two homes on an undersized lot without getting approval from neighbors.

While I'm not aware of anyone who opposes the concept of redeveloping this lot (which has been vacant for many years), there is a strong feeling that any new construction in Allandale should follow the applicable deed restrictions to ensure that neighborhood aesthetics are maintained.

Informal conversations with the property owner were unsuccessful, and as a result, the ANA Executive Committee voted in January to oppose the proposed re-subdivision. We hired an attorney to formally contact the property owner to

let him know that we would take any appropriate legal action needed if he continued to pursue the project. We unsuccessfully opposed the action before the city's Zoning and Platting Commission. Despite a state law that



David Mintz

seems to suggest otherwise, the city considers enforcement of deed restrictions a private matter and it is not something the city takes into account during its decision-making process. (Ironically, the Zoning and Platting Commission has a subcommittee studying the issue of deed restrictions but chose not to delay this case until the subcommittee finishes its work).

If the developer continues to ignore deed restrictions and we are not able to resolve the issue amicably, ANA may need to pursue legal action to defend our rights. While such action needs to be taken only after careful consideration, the cost of inaction is even more serious since it threatens the very core of our neighborhood.

Luckily ANA has reserves that can help cover the cost of this pending action and we will be looking into seeking donations from affected homeowners to help cover these costs, as well. However, whether or not we are successful in stopping this particular effort, there are likely to be similar attempts to re-subdivide lots in the future.

As part of a broader strategic planning effort we hope to get underway in the coming months, a suggestion has been made that ANA consider establishing an ongoing legal defense fund to help com-

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bat threats like this one to the neighborhood. This need is heightened by the fact that we are working to finish paying the law firm that represented ANA in the Walmart lawsuit.

In closing, I'd like to report some good news in that regard. Our debt from the Walmart lawsuit has been reduced significantly and we are on track to pay it off entirely amount by September 2015, if not sooner. While the outstanding balance a few months ago was approximately \$24,800, the Executive Committee voted in December to make an immediate payment of \$5,000 from reserves (not from any membership dues) to reduce the debt. In addition, we raised approximately \$2,500 in an appeal to past donors. In consideration of our efforts, the law firm has agreed to reduce our outstanding debt to \$7,500. We are committed to raising the funds to finish paying this debt, as well as preparing to make sure our neighborhood is protected in future battles like the one facing us into effort to re-subdivide the lot at 5411 Woodview.

As always, if you have questions or neighborhood concerns please feel free to contact me at (512) 626-0113 or send an email to dmintztx@yahoo.com with "ANA" in the subject line. ❖

ANA: The Best Bargain in Allandale?

Continued from front page

We promote responsible development by proactively working with businesses, such as working with the new owners of Little Longhorn to agree on reasonable restrictions to minimize any negative impact on nearby homeowners;

We were actively involved in the effort to draw the lines for the new single member city council districts to keep Allandale in a council district with neighborhoods that share similar concerns, such as development along Burnet Road;

We worked with the Brentwood neighborhood to help manage traffic along Burnet through the installation of the stoplight at Burnet and Shoalwood/Adams;

We are making sure our neighborhood interests are represented in the city's efforts to revise the land development code (CodeNext) ;

We are fiscally responsible and transparent in our actions. Last year we ended our budget with a surplus of more than \$6500 and we took major steps to reduce our legal debts related to the Walmart lawsuit.

Memberships run from January 1 – December 31. Pay online on allandale-neighbor.com or return the form on the back of the newsletter. Additional contributions to support ANA's legal defense fund are also appreciated. ❖

New Website for Council District 7

A new website, www.AustinDistrict7.org, has been launched to give residents in District 7 a forum (unaffiliated with any candidate or outside interest group) to share assessments of candidates based on local issues and other news affecting residents and businesses in the new district. ❖

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Get Connected:

Allandale Neighborhood Association EC members, 2013-2015

The Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) elected 11 new Executive Committee members at the end of 2013; they will serve through September 2015. The Allandale Neighbor would like to introduce these dedicated neighbors to you, a few at a time.

Laura Beck, Communications Chair, Secretary



20+ years PR and marketing work, especially with tech start-ups. Now PR consulting and apparel company, www.strippedshirt.com.

Married with two Gullett Elementary girls and two feral cats who guard our back yard. Bostonian in Austin since 1999, Allandale since 2001, first home is our forever home.

What I love best about Allandale: the uniqueness, that every house, every family is different, special, and warmly welcome.

My favorite time in Allandale: Fourth of July parade day, which totally represents everything I love most about Allandale, the entire neighborhood descending on one block. People of all ages, all decked out in red, white and blue. Everyone part of the parade and cheering each other on. Ending up on the school playground with big smiles, even if it's 100 degrees out.

Caroline Reynolds, Treasurer



Chemist, chemical engineer, 30+ years engineering consultant specializing in waste landfills, wastewater plans, air emission issues.

Married with three cats and one son who works in Silicon Valley and grew up in Allandale, going to Robert E. Lee, Baker, Lamar and McCallum.

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Grew up in Dallas when population was less than 250,000, went to college in Houston when it was smaller than Dallas. Moved to Allandale in 1979.

What I love best about Allandale: I love the smart, caring, independent, involved folks in Allandale. I love the trees and the backyards for kids' play, parties and dinner on the patio. I love walking over to and around Austin Memorial Cemetery.

My favorite time in Allandale: I enjoy Allandale all year round. It is small enough that I see my neighbors at the grocery store or the restaurant. It is wonderful to see everyone, including Amy's Ice Cream, at the Fourth of July parade. In the fall, I enjoy seeing our children walking to and from school and to visit friends. And the live oaks stay green and reach across Shoal Creek Boulevard all winter long, reminding me that warm spring days are coming soon.

Nathan Vassar, EC



Environmental and Litigation Attorney, focusing on water supply and water quality matters across Texas.

Native of southern Virginia, but moved to Austin in 2009. Married Jessica

(a native Texan) in 2011, and we are proud to be Allandale residents after buying our first home here in 2013.

What I love best about Allandale: We love Allandale because it is a community. We are blessed with great neighbors, a walkable neighborhood, and friendly dogs belonging to our neighbors (as we do not yet have our own!). Allandale has a distinctive character and we are proud to be a part of it.

My favorite time in Allandale. Fall in Allandale is our favorite time of year.

Kata Carbone, Vice President, bylaws, land development code, and nomination committees.



Retired, UT-Austin Computer Sciences.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico by an Italian father and an English mother. My contribution to the human race was one beautiful, left-handed, red-haired daughter. I've lived

in Austin since 1977, settled in Allandale in 1984 for its location and stayed because it's safe and has nearly every amenity close by.

What I love best about Allandale: in addition to the wonderful people I've met here, I enjoy the neighborhood greenspaces, huge canopy trees, the creek, wild-life (especially owls of all sizes, coyotes, foxes, and night chirping frogs); but I miss seeing roaming rabbits and deer, migrating turtles, and hummingbirds.

My favorite time in Allandale: October is my favorite time in the neighborhood, mainly because I like seeing kids of all ages dress up and go door-to-door on Halloween, and I like National Night Out when folks turn on their porch lights and go outside to visit and be neighborly. Someday, I'd like to see Allandale (and all of Austin) cut out light pollution so children can see what a starry sky is supposed to look like. ❖

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March General Meeting Features Transportation Issues

The next ANA General Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 5 at 7 p.m. at the NW Rec Center.

Representatives from Capitol Metro will discuss transportation investment options for our city's core as well as

modes under consideration for high-capacity transit here in Austin. The Central Corridor Transportation Study, part of the regional transportation vision called Project Connect, has the goal of providing transportation options to all

municipalities in the Central Texas region.

We will also discuss proposed bike lanes near Lamar Middle School and Gullet Elementary schools as part of the Safe Routes to School program. ❖

Council Approves CUP for Little Woodrow's

In late January, the city council approved a conditional use permit (CUP) for a proposed new location for Little Woodrow's at 5425 Burnet Road. The final CUP contained a number of provisions sought by ANA including steps to limit noise and fewer late night hours. Also, in response to concerns about parking, the city council required the bar to provide additional parking spaces (52 spaces as compared to 41 that the bar owner was proposing), and the city will expedite residential parking permit requests along affected streets, such as Clay and Montview.

ANA had been working on this issue for well over year and a half after the bar's owner made a presentation to the Executive Committee. At that time concerns were raised about re-zoning the area to allow a bar, given its location within 80 feet of existing single family homes on Clay (covered by the Brentwood Neighborhood Association or BNA) and within 200 feet of homes on Montview (ANA). The bar was also going to be open until 2:00 a.m. every night, unlike other bars between 45th street and 2222.

As a result, last year ANA worked with BNA to oppose the zoning change for the location to become a bar. When that effort failed, the ANA Executive Committee passed a motion seeking several items to be included within the conditional use permit.

Many of these items involved reducing the impact of noise emanating from the bar and dealing with operating hours, and for the most part are reflected in the final version of the CUP that was approved by Council. ❖

Neighborhood Watch

Laura DiCarlo

There is always so much to tell about the activities of the Allandale Neighborhood Association safety committee, including updating you on the safety related hot topics that have appeared on the Allandale list-serv and summarizing the crime stats since my last newsletter article.

The biggest (and most controversial) Safety Committee event was a safety audit of parked cars on December 18. It all started with a story I heard on KUT, in which Joy Diaz reported that there are 4000 property crimes in Austin per month. In fact, Diaz added, Austin's

property crime rate is worse than that of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, according to the FBI. Kim Rossmo, a Texas State University criminal justice professor, was interviewed for the piece and said that "Potential victims just have to be smart in terms of living in an urban area. The police have to be responsible beyond just taking a report and filing it. Our neighborhood associations have to play a role." So that's what we did. I worked with our District Representatives, officer Josh Metteauer and officer Chapman, and we walked with three block captain volunteers (thanks Lynn Wilkin-

son, Bob Whitt, and John Keohane) on a couple of streets in the early evening looking

into cars parked on the street to see if valuables were showing. If they were, we informed the residents. We saw a wallet, purse, and a cell phone, but many of the cars were pretty clear of valuables. The whole idea was to remind people to hide or keep anything out of their car that would attract a burglar. Burglary and theft are crimes of opportunity.



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We had positive feedback in general, but a few thought by informing people of our task we invited fear, that we violated people's right to privacy, and that we wasted time doing something unnecessary. My response was that while Allandale is a safe place to live, in order to save ourselves the headache of having property stolen it is always best to keep our belongings as far away as possible from those who might take it.

There was lots of discussion on the list-serv about bike lanes on Treadwell Boulevard and the restriping of the crosswalk across Shoal Creek at Treadwell. For those of you not on the list-serv, the conversation centered around the controversial plan to create protected bike lanes that would restrict parking. There was a meeting at Gullett on December 19 for people to voice their opinions and concerns. With some residents in favor and others opposed, the city is in the process of deciding how best to proceed. In terms of restriping the crosswalk, by the printing of this newsletter that should be

completed, thanks to a couple of residents who took the time to communicate with the city.

Since the December newsletter there have been three Burglary of Residences (BORs) and about 10 burglary of vehicles (BOVs). There were several DWI arrests, many cases of shoplifting at 2525 West Anderson Lane, a dozen or so thefts, two auto thefts, and 9-10 instances of family disturbances and assaults. In general our numbers were about typical or even a little low for what we normally see in Allandale (aside from the uptick in graffiti and the amount of clean up needed). The worst news is the tragic traffic fatality that occurred in the 6500 block of Burnet Road on January 12. A BOR on Lexington involved someone climbing in a kitchen window when a family and their dogs were home to gain access to the garage where they stole racing bikes. There were a few odd instances involving people coming to residents' homes, such as the man offering to paint curb numbers who seemed to spend extra time at

homes with no cars in the driveway.

During the January Executive Committee (EC) meeting I reported that I had seen a rise in graffiti in Allandale in the last few months. In fact, on January 9, KXAN ran a story about how taggers covering murals and graffiti abatement costs the city \$500,000 annually. According to the report, from October 2011 through September 2012 there were 14,687 sites of graffiti reported in Austin, covering 1.3 million square feet. While the number of sites went down to 12,500 in the same time period from 2012 through 2013, tags covered 1.4 million square feet. The EC agreed that we should send a letter to APD and City Council asking for a graffiti detective back, as we used to have one in Austin. Look for a copy of that letter in my next article.

Upcoming event: the second annual Take 10 CPR Training will be held at the Northwest Recreation Center on Saturday, February 22. See notice below for details. ❖

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Attracting Butterflies to Your Garden

Steve Johnson

Butterflies—those self-propelled flowers so well described by Robert Heinlein—are a wonderful and welcome addition to any yard or garden. This article gives you some simple tips to attract butterflies and to help the majestic and endangered monarch butterfly in particular.

Here we'll discuss simple ideas for attracting butterflies and point to detailed information for the dedicated gardener.

According to the experts, you'll need to provide:

- Sun: Butterflies love sunny spots out of the way of strong winds.
- Water: For best results, provide both running water and standing water. To avoid wasting water, a rainwater collection system works best. Otherwise, provide bowls of fresh water.
- Mud: It's best to set up a ground-level stream or pond, but if not, improvise the best you can without wasting water.
- Plants for the larvae (caterpillars), also referred to as host plants. See below.
- Plants for adult butterflies.
- Shelter: Bushes and native clumping grasses work well. See below.

- Pesticides and insecticides: Do not use.

To decide what kind of plants work best for you, consider your location and what types of butterflies you want to attract.

Because there are more than 450 species of native Texas butterflies, we can't discuss them all. Consult a neighborhood gardener, landscaper, or nursery if you're not sure. There are many good nurseries around, including Barton Springs Nursery and Shoal Creek Nursery.

General tips include:

- Plant flowers that bloom at different times of the year so your garden provides nectar from spring through fall.
- Plant short species in front of tall ones, grouped by species and color.
- Focus on plants with red, orange, yellow, and purple flowers, as butterflies are particular attracted to these colors.

Start with our endangered friend the monarch. Milkweed is a must for monarchs;



A monarch emerges from its chrysalis on a giant agave in Ranleigh's front yard.

it's the only plant on which they lay eggs.

According to Ranleigh on 49th Street, tropical milkweed is a popular choice and it's easy to find in local nurseries. Other harder-to-find milkweeds are antelope horn and green milkweed. Ranleigh, whose yard has a Monarch Waystation certification from monarchwatch.org, also recommends planting large agave or bear grass as a shelter and a place for the chrysalis to hang.

Monarch adults feed on nectar from a variety of flowers and fruit-bearing trees. (Let the fruit fall on the ground and decay; butterflies love that!)

Trish on Silverleaf recommends mist-flower for all types of butterflies. She has



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a rainwater collection system that fills a large tank in her back yard. In the tank are fish to eliminate mosquito larvae. She also has a pump to keep the water from becoming stagnant.

Trish, whose certifications include the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife's Texas Wildscapes Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat, has some Meyer lemon trees whose decaying fruit attracts the swallowtail, a very beautiful butterfly. Swallowtails also like dill, fennel, and parsley. (The pipevine swallowtail enjoys its namesake the pipevine, of which there are several varieties.)

A partial list of other butterfly-friendly ground covers, flowers, and grasses includes artemesia, butterfly bush, drummond phlox, cardinal flower, silverleaf mountain mahogany, bee bush, evening primrose, and rock rose. As stated earlier, do your research: not all of these plants will work for you. And by the way, moths are in the butterfly family so most things that butterflies like also attract moths. They are both in the family Lepidoptera (from the Greek lepis meaning scale and pteron meaning wing).

For more information:

- Get the City of Austin's free Native and Adapted Landscape Plants book at a nursery or at Zilker Botanical Garden.
- Get the *quickreferencepublishing.com* Butterflies of Central Texas waterproof flip book at a nursery or online.
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (www.tpwd.state.tx.us)
- National Wildlife Federation (www.nfw.org)
- Texas Discovery Gardens (www.texasdiscoverygardens.org)
- Additional source of butterfly host plant information: Texas Butterfly Ranch (texasbutterflyranch.com)
- Native seed sources include Native



Trish's back yard, showing the large fish-filled tank with a plum tree (butterfly host plant), citrus trees in the back (by the fence), clover beds (host plants, and also good nitrogen fixers). Trish says the water source is great for birds and butterflies seem to like the damp pots. The hackberry tree is a good host for many butterflies.

American Seed in Junction (www.seed-source.com), Green 'n Growing in Pflugerville (www.greenngrowing.com), Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg (www.wildseedfarms.com/home.php), Hill Country Natives in Leander (hillcountrynatives.net) in, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's (especially the twice-annual plant and seed sale). ❖

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The Challenge: A Safe Bicycle Route to Gullett

Tom Linehan

An effort to add protected bike lanes near Gullett is underway and meeting resistance from residents living along the route. On Thursday evening, December 19, at Gullett Elementary, Nathan Wilkes and other staff with the City's Neighborhood Connectivity Division met with residents who live on the street segments closest to Gullett (Treadwell and Bullard Drive), to get their input on proposed modifications to the street striping and parking on those streets that would create a safer bicycle route to the school. It is part of a larger Lamar, Gullett, and Brentwood Safe Bicycle Routes to School initiative the city has been asked to explore, in part, by the principals of those schools. While much of the proposal for improved bicycle access at the three schools was well received, feedback regarding concerns about the proposal's effect on parking near Gullett along Bullard Drive and Treadwell Boulevard prompted this second focus meeting.

If input was what they wanted at the open house, input they got. The small library was packed and the meeting was long. The nearby homeowners are well

aware of the traffic jam in front of Gullett during drop-off and pick-up times. They get that it is not safe for children arriving on bikes in front of the school, but disagree that installing dedicated bike lanes in front of their homes is the right solution. Janie Ruiz, Gullett's principal, was at the meeting and said her primary interest was to make it safer for the children riding their bikes to Gullett. The school has been looking into various options but she did not go into detail. My attempts to contact her for this article were unsuccessful.

Mr. Wilkes kicked off the meeting with some background on growth in the number of bike lanes and cyclists in the city in recent years. Both are on the rise. He also showed slides of a protected bike lane (cycletrack) on Bluebonnet Lane in South Austin along Zilker Elementary. A lot of the residents there were initially resistant to it but now, a year after its installation, they like it. More kids are riding their bikes to school and, based on a recent survey, most of the residents are happy to have it.

What is being considered near Gullett are protected bike lanes on one side of

the street on Bullard between White Rock and Treadwell, and separately on Treadwell in front of the school all the way to Shoal Creek. The protected bike lanes would limit parking to the opposite side of the street. Those in attendance at the meeting were nearly unanimous in their opposition to the proposed lanes, and they certainly don't want them on their side of the street. They offered a number of alternatives, from adding more sidewalks, to having the kids unmount and walk their bikes once they get close to the school, to re-routing traffic during the pickup and drop-off times. A number of people pointed out that creating a permanent bike path—one that remains in place 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—to address a problem that exists only at two short periods of the day when school is in session does not make sense. Because those streets are also not ones that cars or cyclists frequently use on their way to somewhere, the protected lanes wouldn't be of much benefit to cyclists who use their bikes for transportation. This led to the suggestion of another alternative to restrict parking only

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during pickup and drop-off hours to make safe space for bicyclists.

I followed up with Mr. Wilkes after the holidays regarding next steps on the project. He said they don't really have a timeline for the project. The next step is to sift through the feedback they received at the meeting, consider the options, and report back. ANA President Dave Mintz was at the meeting and said the neighborhood association would be taking up the matter at its March meeting because it was something the neighborhood association wanted to weigh in on. ♦

Getting Your Yard Ready for Spring

Laura DiCarlo

Our winter weather has been crazy this year with swings from below freezing to temperatures in the 70s in less than 24 hours! Even though most mornings are cold this time of year, warm afternoons remind us that spring is right around the corner.

I spoke with Joe Salvato, a landscape designer who lives in Allandale, about how to get your yard ready for spring.

Lawns

Late February is the time to de-thatch your lawn. You can rent a machine to do this but there is really no need as you can easily put your mower on the lowest setting and achieve similar results. Cutting your grass really short then raking it up allows more air to get to the soil and more moisture to get to the roots. This helps yards breathe for spring. March is the time to aerate the soil with a rented machine.

Fertilizing should be saved for April because you want to wait until the grass has started growing. If you fertilize in March the roots aren't growing yet to get the benefit—you'll be fertilizing weeds. In addition, if it rains the fertilizer will go below the roots and can't be used.

Perennial beds

Mid February is the time to trim perennial beds back to about four inches from the ground. If you cut back too early there is a risk of growth occurring and then dying if we get warm weather and then a freeze again. The plant will be tricked into growing and then killed back.

Trees

Joe noted this is a preference and not a hard and fast rule, but he believes tree pruning should be done at the end of February because if you do it too early the wound is left open a long time before the tree starts growing again.

The best time to plant trees is October and November. If you plant in the late winter or spring the tree doesn't have time to grow out roots and needs more TLC. Roots grow in the winter and are then ready to take on the summer heat if established in the winter months. Roots don't grow March through October because nutrients go to the foliage.

Joe is available for consultation about your yard—just e-mail me at lbdicarlo@yahoo.com or call (512) 529-1701 and I'll give you his contact information. The Natural Gardener Advice line, (512) 288-6113, is a wonderful resource as well. ♦

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Austin Memorial Park Cemetery

David Carrales

When my wife, Nancy, and I moved into our home on West Park Drive in 1996, we were hesitant to tell family and friends we lived across from Austin Memorial Park Cemetery. The word “cemetery” seemed to conjure visions of toppled tombstones, gnarled trees draped with Spanish moss, and ever present fog. At the time, we saw a cemetery, not a park.

Since then, our view of the Historic Texas Cemetery has evolved. We now embrace the expansive green space as our closest neighborhood park. This past summer, we realized we have a role to play in preserving the cemetery for future generations.

In June 2013, we attended a community engagement meeting at Northwest Recreation Center to learn more about the city’s recent takeover of the management of Austin’s five municipal cemeteries. Kim McKnight, Project Coordinator and Cultural Resource Specialist in the Parks and Recreation Department, facilitated the two-hour meeting, sharing information about the city’s cemeteries and gathering feedback on a cemetery master plan.

Recently, I had a chance to visit with Kim McKnight about the status of the master plan. A transcription of our conversation follows.

AN: Last June, you shared a broad vision for the city’s cemetery master plan process, which included soliciting a contractor for the plan. What is the status of the master plan?

KM: After six meetings over the summer with cemetery stakeholders and neighborhood representatives, we issued a Request for Proposals to find a qualified firm to develop a Cemetery Master Plan

for all five of the city’s municipal cemeteries. A consultant for the Cemetery Master Plan has been selected for recommendation to the City Council. Should the City Council support this recommendation, it is my hope that we move forward with the planning process this spring and conclude in early 2015. I wish I could tell you more about the recommended consultant’s team and proposal, but our city procurement rules limit what I can disclose until a contract is in place. I can tell you that I am very pleased and grateful to our community members for their contribution to this process.

AN: What changes, if any, can citizens expect to see at Austin Memorial Park Cemetery?

KM: Austin Memorial Park Cemetery was established in 1928, and the historic caretaker house and cemetery landscape are distinctive landmarks for the neighborhood and city. The Cemetery Master Plan will be a comprehensive planning tool that will serve as the department’s blueprint for future stewardship of the cemeteries. In addition to the development of a historic context, the master plan will identify significant historic and cultural resources in the cemeteries, like gravestones and mausoleums, and provide preservation and conservation recommendations. Cemeteries are complex landscapes and the plan will provide guidance on issues related to infrastructure like perimeter fencing, roadways, drainage and irrigation. We expect to see a focus on trees and other aspects of the landscape as well. Other items to be addressed include security and vandalism, emergency preparedness, policy and funding, strengthening partnerships and

strategies for increasing heritage tourism. In collaboration with the community, we will also explore additional types of burial options where they are feasible and appropriate. For example, colum-

bariums and cremains gardens are found in many cemeteries, but are not currently an option in our municipal cemeteries. Finally, we expect to have an implementation guide to accompany the master plan that identifies priorities and cost estimates.

AN: How can citizens get involved in preserving the cemetery?

KM: We welcome community involvement in the master plan process. I hope folks will feel free to contact me to hear more about the process or visit our website for more information. We are also fortunate to have a great cemetery team at the Parks and Recreation Department led by Gilbert Hernandez. He holds quarterly meetings about general cemetery issues and his team has made incredible improvements to the cemeteries in the past year. Other partners who focus on cemetery preservation include groups like Save Austin’s Cemeteries, the Travis County Historical Commission, and Preservation Austin.

Here are links to more information about City of Austin’s cemeteries:

Cemetery Master Plan

Website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/cemetery-master-plan>

Kim McKnight, Project Coordinator and Cultural Resource Specialist, Parks and Recreation Dept.

Kim.McKnight@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-9478

City of Austin Cemeteries

Website: <http://austintexas.gov/department/cemeteries>

General inquiries: cemetery@austintexas.gov

Gilbert Hernandez, Cemetery Manager, Parks and Recreation Dept.

Gilbert.Hernandez@austintexas.gov or (512) 453-2345

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McCallum High School Celebrates its 60th Anniversary!

Beth St. Romain

My husband, Malcolm, and I have the honor of being the McCallum High School Band's Booster Club co-presidents. We have done a lot of work this year, and for good reason: this year marks the 60th anniversary of McCallum High School! We'd like to thank all of our Allandale neighbors for supporting us, and we'd especially like to thank a very special group of creative, philanthropic-minded alums!

This year, in lieu of a traditional class reunion, this group of enthusiastic McCallum grads decided to dedicate their time and energy to raising \$100,000 for McCallum High School! We'd like give a shout out to their steering committee: Cari Clark, Gareth Cook, Tommy Cowan, Sam Gainer, Bobby Green, Mike Harris, Emma Lea King Mayton, and Ed Small; and we'd like to thank all of the alums who have come back for fundraisers that have supported the various groups in which they were involved when they attended McCallum,



such as football, golf and band.

And speaking of the Mighty Mac Band, have you ever driven by the school on Koenig and seen the band's practice black-top? If so, you will have noticed the small director's tower that overlooks it. Well, drive by and look again! This year, the 60th

anniversary team raised money for a new tower that dwarfs the old one. (By the way, these towers run upwards of \$30,000, and the directors have been asking for a new one for years!)

If you graduated from McCallum High School (any class, by the way), and you're interested in participating in an event, the following sites will be useful: the official 60th anniversary website (<http://mccallum-high60thanniversary.com>) and the McCallum 60th anniversary Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mccallumhigh60thanniversary>). If you'd like to get involved, sponsoring or volunteering, go to the following page: <http://mccallumhigh60thanniversary.com/how-to-get-involved/how-to-sponsor/>.

Or, if you're an alumni and would like

a 60th anniversary tshirt, contact Beth St. Romain: Beth@AllandaleYoga.com.

Again, thank you for your support this year, and every year. ❖



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Preserving Austin's Trees The Urban Forest Grant Program Can Help

Peggy Maceo

Tree watering at Zilker and Northwest Park during the 2011 drought, irrigation installations for trees along trails, tree plantings along Burnet Road and neighborhood sidewalks, and oak wilt preventative treatments for public trees are all examples of the benefits of the Urban Forest Grant Program (UFGP).

The UFGP was established to promote conservation and improvement projects that benefit Austin's urban forest. This program is supported by the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund, which was created to mitigate the impact of tree removals and impacts to our urban forest. With Austin's rapid growth we are losing many of our old trees and we lose most

of them to development. We are also losing trees because of the drought. The grant program gives the public an opportunity to participate in tree benefit activities. Yearly grants of \$2,000 to \$15,000 have been given recently.

I discovered that few people know about this program yet it is an easy opportunity to make a difference for our urban forest. The city has made the application process simple and many of the grants awarded were to applicants who had never applied for a grant before. Public and private entities (individuals, businesses, home owners associations, youth groups, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies) may apply

for funding. Information can be found at www.austintexas.gov/ufgp.

The money is there for us, the citizens of Austin, to help us preserve, water, plant, and inventory trees; remove invasive species; create award programs, education and public service announcements; and other related efforts.

What projects are needed in your neighborhood? Think of the possibilities and the difference you and your group could make. The urban forest will not thrive without the commitment of tree loving citizens. What you accomplish through the Urban Forest Grant Program benefits all of us for decades to come. ❖

Tree Pruning Workshop at Shoal Creek Nursery

Kata Carbone

More than twenty people attended our fourth annual tree pruning workshop, held January 25 at Shoal Creek Nursery on Hancock Drive. Special thanks go to Mike and his crew for once again hosting this informative event and providing us with the added bonus of a roaring fire in the wood burning stove.

Evidently Allandale tree pruners are already well informed, as most of the

attendees were our Brentwood, Crestview, Highland Park West/Balcones, and Rose-dale neighbors.

Registered consulting arborist Don Gardner spent two hours regaling us with instructions on safely and correctly pruning trees for both health and aesthetics. Don's presentation was peppered with anecdotes of personal experiences, changing trends, and the debunking of popular

detrimental practices such as filling tree cavities and topping crape myrtles.


Choice of proper tools also makes a world of difference and saves time and money. Don explained why one particular tool is a breeze to use, while another will wear you out. If you'd like to know which is which, be sure to attend next year's workshop! ❖




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New School Opens with Strong Allandale Ties

Dusty Kinslow

Thirteen students decked in navy blue polo shirts tucked smartly into their khaki shorts stood proudly on the steps of Northwest Baptist Church on Woodrow Avenue in central Austin. They were preparing to have their picture taken on this unusually memorable day. August 12, 2013, was their first day of school. However, today was no run-of-the-mill first day of school; today was the very first day of school ever for Austin Classical School, a school born out of the dreams of several Allandale families.

Glenn and Stephanie Lucke, Jeff and Anna Marshall, Harry and Cici Scott, and several others moved their families to Allandale with the purpose of cultivating rich relationships with each other and within their neighborhood. Each family intentionally chose the beautiful Allandale neighborhood for its prime central location and warm community feel. As they added children to their families, however, educational options became a persistent topic of discussion among the friends. Most assumed they would educate their children the traditional way; but, after beginning to research options, several families began considering a classical,

Christian education for their children.

Several excellent classical schools operate in and around Austin, but each require a long commute from Allandale to the north or south ends of town. Proximity to home and community were highly important values for the group, so the idea was suggested to start a centrally located school. The group researched the classical school model, discussed details, formed connections to other interested educators and families, and the Austin Classical School slowly became a reality.

Starting a non-profit school takes business know-how and educational chops. Luckily, the Austin Classical launch team had experiences and resumes that complemented each other well. The Scotts contributed Harry's commercial real estate skills as the school navigated lease negotiations and city permits. Cici offered her expertise in systems development. Jeff Marshall led the way with his technological savvy, while his wife, Anna, offered her experience as a professional educator and headed up the marketing aspect of the school. Glenn Lucke gave theological guidance while Stephanie's background in finance helped immensely. Several other Allandale families enrolled their chil-

dren for the inaugural year, including Jon and Carolyn Ahrens, Kevin and Tara Donahue, and Brian and Karen Riley. Jon and Erin Minor and Jim and Amanda McKinley also supported Austin Classical despite not yet having school-aged children. After almost a year of planning and praying, working and waiting, the dream became a reality as the school opened its doors that August day, servicing students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

Next fall, Austin Classical School will add a pre-Kindergarten class, as well as fifth and sixth grades. Hopes are high that classes will fill and that growth will continue. Many hours have been given to this labor of love, and many more will be required. However, to see it all come to fruition that twelfth day of August was something quite lovely. As Stephanie Lucke said, "It is such an honor to create something beautiful where nothing like it was before." Austin Classical School has strong Allandale ties and hopes that those continue for many years to come.

If you would like to learn more about classical, Christian, university-model® education, please visit the Austin Classical website at www.austinclassical.org. ❖



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Noble Sandwich Co. – Eat Like Royalty, Right in the Hood

Laura Beck

A few months ago, more “another cool restaurant coming to Allandale” buzz began, this time with Noble Sandwich Co., formerly Noble Pig. The original and only other location, up at 620 by Anderson Mill, had been on my list for years, so many rave reviews! To have Noble in our hood was very exciting!



I couldn't wait to learn more, so I took the whole family up for Sunday brunch to chat with chef and co-owner Brandon

Martinez and to learn about the Burnet Road location, which will be at 4805, between the Omelettry and Pinthouse.

I learned that Brandon and his partner, John Bates, who met at culinary school in Corpus Christi in 1998, opened the first Noble in September 2010 and have had wild success since. The neighborhood

really embraced the idea of from-scratch, upscale, hipster-cool food in Cedar Park. That customer-fan support and word of mouth kept things going and growing such that, at the same time they are opening the Burnet Road location, they are also moving to a much larger space

on 620. Opening two new restaurants at the same time may seem like more than enough, but how about adding busy fami-



lies among the two owners, including a brand new baby for Brandon?

With all this, you'd think keeping things simple might be the way to go. Nope. At Noble Sandwich, they hand make everything. I mean everything: hand cured meats, fresh baked breads. The only two things Brandon said they do not make themselves are potato chips and mayonnaise. Wow.

So, let's talk about this handmade deliciousness we'll be able to get right in our own backyard. First, the sandwiches: many hand cured meats, but also veggie options (thus the name change from Noble Pig to Noble Sandwich. With both wives vegetarian, the founders had to expand beyond just love of pork and other meats). The namesake Noble Pig is a tangy combo of spicy ham, pulled pork, provolone, and of course, bacon. We tried it on rye, which they recently added



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to their list of store-baked breads. It was awesome. We also loved the carrot and pickle relish on the side.

Noble Sandwich will also bring us fun breakfast options, served til noon every day. We tried the amazing fried egg, cheddar and bacon sandwich on wheat—with breakfast potatoes in the sandwich. I'd seen pictures of this beauty in Austin Monthly, where it made my mouth water. It did not disappoint!

Noble also has a kids' menu and is generally family friendly. My girls loved the grilled cheese, though Brandon says the PB&J is likely the kid favorite. With one owner with little kiddos and the other with teens, these guys run a place with family in mind, and the many other families there prove that the menu appeals to all ages.

We also loved the chewy brownie cookie and the caramel pop-

corn (with bacon!). There are many other things on the menu I can't wait to try next time—I have my eye on the crispy blueberry waffle with sausage, the pressed cauliflower and three cheese sandwich and the TNP club with house bacon olive oil pickles! Yum!

Noble Sandwich Central, on Burnet, should open in March. They'll keep the same hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Friday through Sunday, 7:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., with breakfast every day until noon. Brandon said they'll be adding some new things to the menu just for us. Oh and that super cool Dr. Pepper sign that was uncovered in the building and likely dates back to the 1950s? They are keeping it! Just the kind of thing that will make us Allandalers love them even more. ❖

Gullett Good News

Debbie Trominski

Gullett is a school like no other place and there's a whole lot going on. Our fifth graders are learning the meaning of leaving their school a better place as they prepare to make their transition to middle school. The Legacy Project is an annual endeavor that involves each graduating class in finding a way to improve and beautify Gullett. Every year the students themselves come up with the project idea and vote for consensus. This year the students have decided to create a large peri-

odic table of the elements to hang near the gymnasium. The table will be created using tiles and each student will create and personalize at least one tile. Fifth grader William Dooley is excited about the periodic table project since he likes science. Many thanks go out to Laura Dooley and Sabria Wallace, the parent volunteers guiding the fifth graders throughout the project.

The class of 2014 is going above and beyond and is leaving an extra legacy

behind with an additional improvement to Gullett in the form of a Buddy Bench. A Buddy Bench is a place where kids can sit when they are feeling down or left out and in need of a friend. What a fantastic idea! The bench should be installed by May 30, when its teacher champion, Ms. Valentino, will present it at the morning assembly. The fifth grade is funding their legacies by the Fun Run they held on February 8.

Continued on page 18

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Gullett Good News

Continued from page 17

On Saturday, April 12, 2014 Gullett Elementary will hold its annual Gecko Gala silent auction at the Spider House Ballroom. Last year this event raised thousands of dollars and was attended by hundreds of local parents. This year we're committed to making it an even bigger success with the community's generous support! We're currently collecting merchandise and services for our event. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to ensure Gullett maintains its reputation of excellence. In exchange for your support, your business would gain valuable exposure including recognition on the Gala website, recognition in the school's newsletter (distributed to more than 700 adults), and a free ad in the Gullett 2014-2015 Student Directory. For more details, please contact Christy Bell at christy.geckogala@gmail.com.

Geckos love it when you buy local and support small business, but when you make online purchases you can make sure that some of that purchase gets reinvested into our school. Gullett has an arrangement with Amazon, called Amazon School Rewards, where 4-8% of your purchase will be given to the PTA. When you visit Amazon simply go to the site via this link: <http://www.amazon.com/?tag=gullettgeckos-20> (Note only one 't' in 'gullett'). Bookmark it! Anyone can use this link, so pass it on to all your friends and family who love Gullett and its Geckos. More information about Amazon School Rewards is available on Gullett's website at GullettGeckos.com.

In addition to our fabulous K-5 grades, Gullett also has an outstanding tuition-based Pre-K program. Registration is open through February 21 to fill the 14 open spots. Anyone in AISD is eligible, not just those zoned for Gullett. Visit the main office to register. Tell your favorite four-year-olds or soon-to-be four-year-olds about this great opportunity.

Upcoming Events:

February 28 – Family Fun Night, Gullett cafeteria
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

March 6 – 7 – Sports Day

March 10 – 14 – Spring Break

March 21 – Family Fun Night, Gullett cafeteria
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

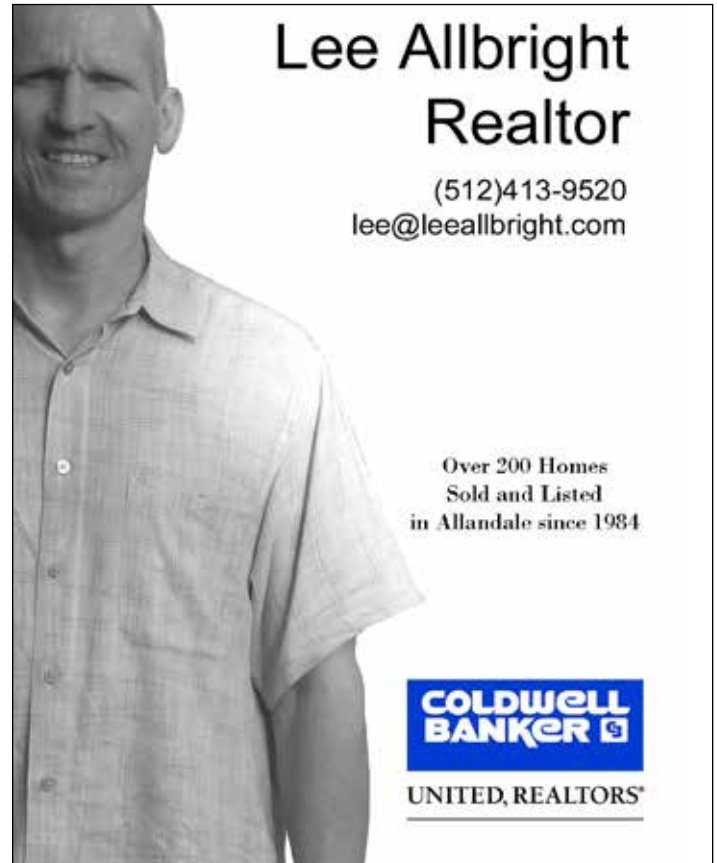
April 12 – Silent Auction, Spider House Ballroom
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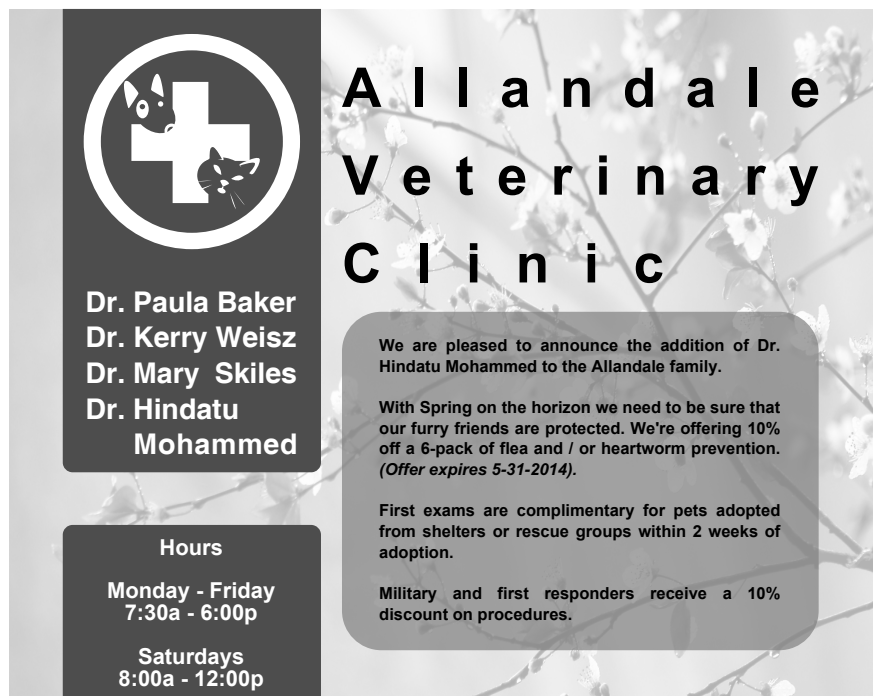


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Lamar Scottie Beat: Sports at Lamar!

Lamar Middle School has a little bit for everyone: academics, fine arts, Scottie Clubs, careers and technology, and sports—lots and lots of sports and exercise.

Our fall semester seventh and eighth grade competitive sports included girls' volleyball, girls' basketball, boys' soccer, and football. Our seventh grade volleyball team finished the season as North Zone Champions, and our eighth grade football team, returning City Champions from 2012-2013, took second place in the city championships this year! Spring semester sports are off and running as girls' soccer and boys' basketball began this January while track and tennis, both boys' and girls', will finish out the semester. Watch out for our eighth grade boys' track team, as they will be defending their title as seventh grade North Zone Champions!

Our students are not limited to these competitive sports at Lamar, as we have

many other sports options. Our physical education classes are offered to all students—mandated two semesters for sixth graders and one for seventh and eighth graders. Students may also participate in our dance fine arts classes as an elective or substitute for their physical education requirements.

Our Friday Scottie Clubs are also a way to participate in sports. The Athletics, Ultimate Frisbee, and Winter Guard Clubs are all active options for our students in sixth through eighth grades to end their week. Students in the Athletics Club may change sports every six weeks, choosing between flag football, volleyball, softball, basketball, baseball skills, and tennis. In addition to regular Friday club time, our Ultimate Frisbee Club competes with other area middle schools during the month of April. School club teams, both public and private, compete Saturday mornings at East Metropolitan Park with

a season-ending tournament the last weekend of the month.

Lamar's Winter Guard Team (think high school color guard, but indoors) meets several times a week in addition to their club time. They have five competitions lined up this spring culminating March 22 at the TCGC State Championships at Hendrickson High School. Last season they took first place in their three regular season competitions and earned second place at the state championships!

Finally, for those who just want to get moving during the day, before school and the latter half of lunch is an excellent time to do so. Every morning from 7:45-8:15 the small gym is available for soccer, the large gym for basketball and volleyball, and flag football and basketball is available outside. Lunchtime activities include basketball and recess in the courtyard area with the track for running or those just wishing to move around while visiting with friends! ❖

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Dog Talk: Bringing an Additional Dog into the Family

Cheryl Silver, (512) 454-7219, csilver2@austin.rr.com

Doing Airedale Terrier rescue, I am often in the position of hearing from families who have at least one dog and want to add another to the family. Their reasons vary. Some have a young playful dog who they hope will burn off some of his energy playing with another dog. Some have a senior dog who they know will soon be passing and they hope that senior will impart some positive behaviors on a young addition to the family. Some just feel it is best for a dog to have a doggy buddy. Some folks lament the aging of their senior dog and miss the physical exercise they enjoyed together and hope the new addition to the family can become a running buddy or a companion in participating in hiking or similar activities.

If you are considering an addition of a dog to your home where you already have a dog, let me urge you to take your time and proceed methodically.

First I urge you to stop and look at yourself and your family members and

determine what kind of skills you have in evaluating dogs and then in assessing what skills you bring to the table to train, manage, and help your dogs through the adjustment period. Many, many dogs have been purchase/"rescued" off Craigslist or from sources where evaluation is minimal, and when their new owners get them home they find that a terrible decision was made and the dog's needs far exceed their own skills at training the dog. Alas, folks who find themselves in such a situation are typically anxious to rid themselves of the very dog they hoped would be a long-term family member so the dog ends up being bounced around and emotionally stressed.

If your family includes young children, the reason for evaluating the dog early is even greater since you certainly do not want a child in the middle of a dog fight. If your spouse or partner is not keen on this, life will be difficult and stressful for everyone.

I have said in other articles that I strongly urge you to get a dog of the

opposite sex from the one you currently have. That is a simple first step. Second, ideally you will look for your dog by going through a group that cares for their dogs in foster homes so you can learn the style of play the dog has, if the dog is respectful of older dogs and responds appropriately to communications from other dogs, and if he demonstrates problematic resource guarding behaviors.

Another issue to examine is whether you have the space to keep everyone safe during the adjustment period—do not assume everyone will love everyone from the first day.

Sometimes people make the assumption that getting a puppy will help them avoid difficulties. What is critical is the age the pup was separated from its litter and mother and if the pup saw its mother behaving in a manner that was fearful of people. Pups pick up on these early impressions and can become fearful dogs.

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The following are the basic questions we ask of families who are surrendering their dogs to us. It may be helpful to you:

- Name of vet who knows this dog
- Name of dog
- Age/DOB
- Gender
- Spayed/neutered and when
- Where did the dog come from?
- How long have you had him?
- Weight
- Has dog ever had a litter? How many?
- On heartworm preventative? When was last dose?
- Has dog ever been hit by a car?
- How is dog's health? Is he on any medications?
- House trained? Does she give a signal to go out? If so what is the signal?
- Crate trained? If so what kind of crate (wire or plastic)?
- How does dog respond to storms?
- How is he with cats?
- How is she with dogs of same sex? Opposite sex?
- Has he ever bitten or nipped anyone in the family?

- Has she ever bitten or nipped anyone besides family members?
- When was the most recent biting incident?
- What are his three favorite things to do?
- What are his least favorite things to do?
- Where does she sleep at night?
- Where does he spend his days?
- Does he dig in the yard? If so, is it at the fence line, to get out, or a hole to lie in?
- What kind of fence do you have?
- Does he ever go over the fence?
- Does he ever go under the fence?
- How does she act if another dog comes up to the fence?
- Does he like to go for walks?
- Does he pull like a sled dog?
- If you are walking him on leash and a loose dog runs up, what is his reaction?
- What if you run into people that he doesn't know? How does he react?
- How does he react to people on bicycles? On skateboards?
- How does he react to people who come to your house?

- How is he in the car?
- How is he at the vet's office? Does he need to be muzzled?
- Is he ever left loose in the house when no one is home? What happens?
- Has he ever had any formal training? How did it go?
- Has he been around children? What ages? What was their interaction like? When did this happen?
- How is he with grooming?
- Many dogs do not like their ears or their feet handled—what about your dog?
- Is he a real barker?
- What are the three things that an adopter might find to be a challenge with your dog?
- What are the three things that an adopter will really like about your dog?
- What food does your dog eat? Any allergies?
- What is his feeding schedule?

Many dogs will “guard” special toys/ bones/possessions/people/locations, i.e., they will growl or snap if their control of the special item is challenged. Describe your dog's guarding behavior. ❖



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AVG SALES PRICE	\$344,411	\$386,992
AVG SQ FT OF SOLD PROPERTIES	1821 SQ FT	1785 SQ FT
AVG DAYS ON MARKET	38 DAYS	18 DAYS

All statistics & square footage are from Austin MLS for single family residence as of January 1, 2014. For detailed market information about your home contact Lisa Harrell, Broker.

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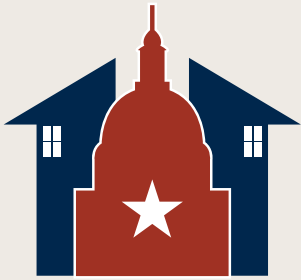
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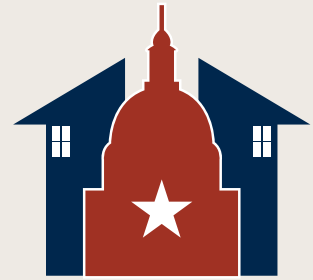


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Shoal Creek: A Window Into the Past

Continued from front page

At a later time, when that sea was even shallower, there was more light (and therefore more sea creatures) the Edwards limestone was laid down. The tiny calcareous creatures were still living there—hence the limestone—but there were also other, larger sea creatures (like *ceritella proctori* and *Neithea Texana*) that left larger, more distinct, fossils. If you see limestone with a lot of fossils in it, you're probably looking at Edwards limestone.

In many places in Shoal Creek you see bands of bluish gray shale. These are outcroppings of the Eagle Creek shale layer. This is the same shale that is being exploited for oil and gas farther south in Texas; due to faulting activity, it reaches near the surface in parts of Austin, and you can see it right here in Shoal Creek (but it probably wouldn't be a good idea to try to squeeze oil out of it here, in case you were wondering). This shale was laid at times when the ocean over Austin was deeper and quieter.

In parts of Shoal Creek you may see bands of yellowish clay. This is usually found within or near Austin clay, which is older than both the Eagle Ford shale and the Buda limestone. This yellow clay is actually composed of volcanic ash, as there were numerous volcanoes in the Austin area (including one a little south of the airport) at that time!

In theory, these different layers should offer a fairly clear picture of what the Austin area was like throughout the last 100 million years, with deeper layers representing earlier times. However, another geological event disrupts this record somewhat. As mentioned above, "faulting activity" (the movement of earth along faults, in this case the Balcones fault) occurred in Austin about 16 million years; this resulted in a lot of movement and slippage of the earth, and it also means that Shoal Creek is one of those rare places where you can see many different epochs of geological history without having to do any actual digging. This is why you see all of these different layers all jumbled up together. So, for example, in one geologist's report, "There is Eagle Ford shale in the area near North-west Park, but there are fault contacts with Austin chalk there as well, and down-

stream near Northland drive the creek flows through the Del Rio Buda limestone." All of this in just a few blocks!

The different layers of rock are one thing that jumps out at anyone who spends a significant amount of time in or near the creek, but as fascinating as they are for geological history it's hard to beat real fossils for that "coolness" factor. In 1990, an amateur paleontologist named Robert McDonald was exploring Shoal Creek just south of Foster with his five-year-old son when he came upon the most spectacular fossil that has ever been found in Shoal Creek: an almost entirely intact Plesiosaur, an aquatic creature that lived in the shallow seas from 190 to 65 million years ago. Described by paleontologists at the time as a "major find," the fossil belonged to an animal that was 14 to 18 feet long and weighed one ton, and it was the most complete Plesiosaur fossil that had ever been found. Today, you can visit the actual Shoal Creek Plesiosaur at the Texas Memorial Museum.

The conditions responsible for preserving a specimen as complete as the Shoal Creek Plesiosaur (the animal must die of causes other than predation and must be buried in a suitable medium before scavengers can find its body) are rare enough that it is unlikely that another such specimen is waiting to be found in Shoal Creek, but fossil hunters need not dismay: the creek is full of wonderful specimens of invertebrate creatures (see picture for examples of what you might find). I can attest to this: we have so many fossils of little shelled creatures that I've had to impose a ban on bringing any more into the house. Also, although it is unlikely that you will find a complete Plesiosaur, people have found Mosasaur bones in the creek, and I have personally found both bones and fins of an as-yet unidentified animal.

Fossils are not the only "cool" thing you can find in the creek—there are also places



*Sample of fossils found in Shoal Creek (from top left): (1) *ceritella proctori*, (2) unidentified oyster, (3) *Texigryphaea mucronata*, (4) *Neithea Texana*, (5) *Ilymatogyra arietina* (*gryphaea*), (6) *Ilymatogyra arietina* encrusted with pyrite. Fossil identification is by author (may not be entirely accurate!).*

here and there where you can find nuggets (or "nodules") of pyrite. These are typically found in the Eagle Ford shale, and the pattern of deposition indicates that they were deposited in an environment without oxygen. The shale was formed on the ocean floor first, and then the pyrite formed in it afterwards. Sometimes you can even find fossils that are covered with pyrite. I have some of these, and I can attest that they are really something special. One note for pyrite hunters: the pyrite found in Shoal Creek is not typically that bright light gold color you see with commercial specimens; it is usually a dully gleaming reddish brown. And, two words of warning: it rusts! I found that out after leaving some on top of some light-colored landscaping brick. D'oh!

If you are interested in learning more about the geological processes and history represented by the rock layers of Shoal Creek, you can find more information by clicking on the links below. You can also contact Linda McCall at the Bureau of Economic Geology at UT, at (512) 471-0320. One final note: the property lines of the homes along Shoal Creek actually extend into the creek, meaning that many parts of the creek are technically private property. Please act accordingly!

Links

Guidebook to the Geology of Travis County, www.lib.utexas.edu/geo/ggtc/ch2.html

Guidebook to the Geology of the Austin Area www.lib.utexas.edu/geo/ggtc/ch1.html#cretaceous

Central Texas in the Lower Cretaceous www.lib.utexas.edu/geo/ggtc/figs/fig.4.gif ❖

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